

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1           **Claim 1 (currently amended):** A driving assistance apparatus  
2       for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle  
3       in an easily understanding manner, comprising:  
4            a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;  
5            an virtual observing point converting unit which converts  
6       an image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a  
7       virtual observing point;  
8            [[a]] an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the  
9       images viewed from a virtual observing point to display a  
10      peripheral condition of the vehicle;  
11       an obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an  
12      obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the  
13      own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;  
14      and  
15       a safety area predicting unit which predicts a safety area  
16      of the peripheral portion of the own vehicle, in which the  
17      obstacle is not present, based upon the information acquired by  
18      the obstacle sensing unit.

1           **Claim 2 (original):** The driving assistance apparatus as  
2       claimed in claim 1, further comprising:  
3            a safety area superposing unit which superposes the safety  
4       area on the image synthesized by the image synthesizing unit for

5 display the superposed area.

1           **Claim 3 (currently amended):** A driving assistance apparatus  
2 for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle  
3 in an easily understanding manner, comprising:

4           a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;

5           a virtual observing point converting unit which converts an  
6 image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a virtual  
7 observing point;

8           [[a]] an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the  
9 images viewed from a virtual observing point to display a  
10 peripheral condition of the vehicle;

11          an obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an  
12 obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the  
13 own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;  
14 and

15          an obstacle area predicting unit for predicting an obstacle  
16 area; and

17          an obstacle area superposing unit which superposes the  
18 obstacle area on the image synthesized by the image synthesizing  
19 unit for display the superposed area.

1           **Claim 4 (currently amended):** ~~The driving assistance~~  
2 ~~apparatus as claimed in claim 1, A driving assistance apparatus~~  
3 ~~for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle~~  
4 ~~in an easily understanding manner, comprising:~~

5          a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;

6          an virtual observing point converting unit which converts

7       an image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a  
8       virtual observing point;

9           an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the images  
10       viewed from a virtual observing point to display a peripheral  
11       condition of the vehicle;

12       an obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an  
13       obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the  
14       own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;  
15       and

16       a safety area predicting unit which predicts a safety area  
17       of the peripheral portion of the own vehicle, in which the  
18       obstacle is not present, based upon the information acquired by  
19       the obstacle sensing unit;

20           wherein the obstacle sensing unit corresponds includes a  
21       distance measuring sensor capable of measuring a distance from  
22       the own sensor up to the obstacle, and outputs the shortest  
23       distance from the own vehicle among the detected obstacles as the  
24       distance up to the obstacle,

25           wherein the safety area predicting unit predicts a safety  
26       area corresponding to an area is detectable by the distance  
27       measuring sensor and the area is located within one of a sphere  
28       and a circle where the distance up to the obstacle is defined as  
29       a radius, while a mounting position of the distance measuring  
30       sensor is used as a center of the sphere or the circle.

1           Claim 5 (currently amended):—The driving assistance  
2       apparatus as claimed in claim 3, A driving assistance apparatus  
3       for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle

4       in an easily understanding manner, comprising:

5           a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;

6           an virtual observing point converting unit which converts

7    an image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a

8   virtual observing point;

9           an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the images

10   viewed from a virtual observing point to display a peripheral

11   condition of the vehicle;

12          a first obstacle sensing unit for measuring a distance from

13   the own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the

14   obstacle, and also for sensing presence of the obstacle by way

15   of a sensor;

16          a second obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an

17   obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the

18   own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;

19          an obstacle area predicting unit for predicting an obstacle

20   area; and

21          an obstacle area superposing unit which superposes the

22   obstacle area on the image synthesized by the image synthesizing

23   unit for display the superposed area;

24          wherein the first and second obstacle sensing unit includes

25   units include an ultrasonic-wave sensor capable of measuring a

26   distance from the own sensor up to the obstacle, and outputs the

27   shortest distance from the own vehicle among the detected

28   obstacles as the distance up to the obstacle; and

29          wherein the obstacle area predicting unit predicts an area

30   where an obstacle is present, that corresponds to an area

31   detectable by the ultrasonic-wave sensor, and the area located

32       outside one of a sphere and a circle where the distance up to the  
33       obstacle is defined as a radius, while a mounting position of the  
34       ultrasonic-wave sensor is used as a center of the sphere or  
35       circle.

1           **Claim 6 (currently amended):—The driving assistance**  
2       ~~apparatus as claimed in claim 3, A driving assistance apparatus~~  
3       for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle  
4       in an easily understanding manner, comprising:

5           a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;  
6           an virtual observing point converting unit which converts  
7       an image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a  
8       virtual observing point;

9           an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the images  
10       viewed from a virtual observing point to display a peripheral  
11       condition of the vehicle;

12           a first obstacle sensing unit for measuring a distance from  
13       the own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the  
14       obstacle, and also for sensing presence of the obstacle by way  
15       of a sensor;

16           a second obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an  
17       obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the  
18       own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;

19           an obstacle area predicting unit for predicting an obstacle  
20       area; and

21           an obstacle area superposing unit which superposes the  
22       obstacle area on the image synthesized by the image synthesizing  
23       unit for display the superposed area;

24           wherein the first and second obstacle sensing ~~unit includes~~  
25        units include one of an ultrasonic-wave sensor having a plurality  
26        of ultrasonic-wave oscillating sources and an ultrasonic-wave  
27        sensor capable of varying a direction of the scanning operation,  
28           wherein the obstacle area predicting unit grasps a  
29        substantially shape of the obstacle which is faced to a side of  
30        the own vehicle based upon the information derived from the first  
31        and second obstacle sensing unit units, and predicts the area  
32        where the obstacle is present, which involving a dimension of the  
33        obstacle.

1           **Claim 7 (original):** The driving assistance apparatus as  
2        claimed in claim 2, wherein the safety area superposing unit  
3        superposes the safety area predicted by the safety area  
4        predicting unit on the image synthesized by the image  
5        synthesizing unit in at least one of a flickering display manner,  
6        a half-tone dot meshing display manner, and a transparent color  
7        display manner.

1           **Claim 8 (original):** The driving assistance apparatus as  
2        claimed in claim 3, wherein the obstacle area superposing unit  
3        superposes the obstacle area predicted by the obstacle area  
4        predicting unit on the image synthesized by the image  
5        synthesizing unit in at least one of a flickering display manner,  
6        a half-tone dot meshing display manner, and transparent color  
7        display manner.